

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-04

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 H-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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DRAFTED BY PM/SAS: HPRECHT:LD
APPROVED BY PM/SAS: MR. WINSHIP

NEA/IRN - MR. NAAS (DRAFT)
H - MR. FLATEN (SUBS)

----- 106250

R 022349Z DEC 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

UNCLAS STATE 294377

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, IR

SUBJECT: F-18

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION SECRETARY RECEIVED FOLLOWING LETTER
FROM CONGRESSMAN FASCELL:

"I AM WRITING TO EXPRESS MY DEEP CONCERN OVER THE PRO-
POSAL BY IRAN TO FINANCE DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES RELATING
TO POSSIBLE PROCUREMENT BY THAT COUNTRY OF F-18 AIRCRAFT.

THIS SALE APPEARS TO INVOLVE SIMPLE FEASIBILITY STUDIES
BUT IN MY VIEW THE ISSUES INVOLVED ARE MUCH BROADER AND
REQUIRE MOST CAREFUL SCRUTINY BY BOTH THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH
AND THE CONGRESS. INDEED, IT IS MY VIEW THAT FAILURE TO
SUBMIT THIS SALE TO CONGRESS UNDER PROVISIONS OF SECTION
36(B) OF THE ARMS EXPORT CONTROL ACT WOULD VIOLATE THE IN-
TENT OF THE CONGRESS AND MIGHT SERIOUSLY ERODE THE ABILITY
OF THE CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE TO WORK TOGETHER CON-
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STRUCTIVELY IN THE AREA OF INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS.

AMONG THE SERIOUS ISSUES RAISED BY THIS PROPOSAL ARE
THE FOLLOWING:

1. TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE UNITED STATES WILLING TO ALLOW
FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAJOR WEAPONS
SYSTEMS BY U.S. MANUFACTURERS?
2. IS THE U.S. WILLING TO SELL AN F-18 MODEL TO A
FOREIGN GOVERNMENT WHICH MAY WELL BE SUPERIOR TO
THOSE PROCURED FOR OUR OWN FORCES?
3. IS IT PROPER POLICY TO ACCEPT FOREIGN FINANCING
FOR AN ARMS SYSTEM PRIOR TO A DECISION TO PROVIDE
SUCH A SYSTEM TO THE GOVERNMENT IN QUESTION?
4. WHY MUST THIS POLICY DECISION WITH SUCH LONG TERM
IMPLICATIONS BE MADE AT THIS TIME, YEARS BEFORE POS-
SIBLE DELIVERY OF THE AIRCRAFT?
5. IS DEVELOPMENT OF A LAND-BASED F-18 MODEL IN THE
INTERESTS OF A COHERENT U.S. AIRCRAFT EXPORT POLICY?

CLEARLY THESE AND OTHER MAJOR POLICY QUESTIONS INDICATE THAT THIS SALE IS PRECISELY THE KIND OF MAJOR ARMS POLICY DECISION WHICH THE CONGRESS HAS LEGISLATIVELY INDICATED IT WISHES TO SHARE WITH THE EXECUTIVE THROUGH THE REVIEW PROCEDURES MANDATED IN SECTION 36(B). IN VIEW OF THIS, I HOPE THAT IF THE ADMINISTRATION WISHES TO GO FORWARD WITH THIS PROPOSAL IT WILL SUBMIT IT TO CONGRESS FOR A THOROUGH REVIEW. SINCE THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH HAS ASSURED THIS COMMITTEE THAT CONTROVERSIAL SALES OF THIS KIND WILL NOT BE MADE, EXCEPT IN AN EMERGENCY, WHILE CONGRESS IS IN ADJOURNMENT, I TRUST THAT NO SUBMISSION WOULD BE MADE UNTIL JANUARY, 1977."

2. SUBSTANCE OF DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE FOLLOWS:

"THE ISSUES RAISED IN YOUR LETTER ARE CENTRAL TO THE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WE EXPECT TO GIVE TO THE IRANIAN UNCLASSIFIED

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PROPOSAL. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HAS THIS PROPOSAL UNDER CONSIDERATION AND HAS NOT YET CONVEYED TO US THE TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES. WHEN THIS INFORMATION IS IN HAND AND BEFORE REPLYING TO THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT, WE WILL BE SURE TO CONSULT WITH CONGRESS AND WILL COMPLY FULLY WITH BOTH THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT OF THE ARMS EXPORT CONTROL ACT OF 1976

IN ANY EVENT, WE WILL NOT PROCEED WITH ANY DECISION
BEFORE CONGRESS RECONVENES IN JANUARY."

3. WE ARE REPLYING IN A SIMILAR VEIN TO LETTERS FROM
SENATORS HUMPHREY AND CASE AND CONGRESSMAN HAMILTON ON
SAME SUBJECT. KISSINGER

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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